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United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the twelfth session (15-19 April 2013)

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Summary

The present report contains the summary and recommendations of the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 April 2013. The Committee, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity for a four-year period.

[6 May 2013]

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Chapter I

Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twelfth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2011/2 of 26 April 2011, 2011/22 of 27 July 2011 and 2012/28 of 27 July 2012, and other related resolutions on public administration and development,

Referring to General Assembly resolutions 65/141 of 20 December 2010 and 66/184 of 22 December 2011, and other related resolutions on information and communication technologies for development,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 67/195 of 21 December 2012, in which the Assembly stressed the important role of Governments in the design of their national public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, the effective use of information and communications technologies, including on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[1] in which world leaders reaffirmed that democracy, good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels, as well as an enabling environment, are essential for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and that to achieve the sustainable development goals, institutions at all levels need to be effective, transparent, accountable and democratic,[2]

Recognizing that effective governance at the local, subnational, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all is critical for advancing sustainable development,[3]

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[4] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[5] endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit themselves to implementing the Programme of Action,

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[1] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.
[2] Ibid., para. 10.
[3] Ibid., para. 76.
[4] Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.
[5] Ibid., chap. II.

Also recalling Council resolution 2012/26 of 27 July 2012, in which the Council called upon the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to fully and effectively implement the commitments made in the eight priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including good governance at all levels, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner,

Recognizing the commitment on meeting the special needs of Africa expressed in the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[6] and also recognizing the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Council on issues related to governance and public administration in development,

Taking note of the support provided by the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance to countries on public sector leadership and institutional and human resources capacity development, electronic and mobile government and citizen engagement in managing development programmes,

Underscoring the centrality of transparent, accountable, efficient, effective, equitable, professional and citizen-oriented public administration to the successful implementation of development policies and management of development programmes,

Also underscoring the actual potential of e-government in promoting transparency, accountability, efficiency and citizen engagement in public service delivery,

Taking note of the invitation of the Council to the Committee of Experts to study the effect of specific practices in responsive and inclusive public governance on development and the request that the Committee convey the outcome of the study to the Council in the report on its twelfth session, held in April 2013, with a view to assisting the process of preparing for deliberations on a post-2015 development agenda,[7]

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the conclusions of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twelfth session on the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda;[8]

2. *Notes with appreciation* the involvement of the United Nations system in the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, and encourages the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and others to continue to strengthen inter-agency cooperation in addressing the multidimensional nature of governance and in promoting a holistic, transformative approach to governance, public administration and institutional development at the national and local levels with a view to strengthening the enabling environment for sustainable development;

3. *Notes with appreciation also* the global thematic consultation on governance, co-led by the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and its valuable

[6] See A/56/326, paras. 239-260.

[7] Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/28.

[8] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 24* (E/2013/44).

contribution to promoting open, inclusive and broad-based deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda;

4. *Reaffirms* that transparent, participatory, and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive public administration that is enabled by information and communications technologies serve as a foundation for sustainable development at all levels;

5. *Stresses* the centrality of effective and responsive local government to the achievement of sustainable development, and emphasizes the need to strengthen governance, public administration and professionalism at both the national and local levels to improve good governance, professionalism and the delivery of public services;

6. *Notes* that the Committee of Experts has the role of supporting the Council in addressing the global development agenda, bearing in mind the need for authoritative and insightful global advice on governance and public administration in its various dimensions as a foundation of sustainable development in the period after 2015, and encourages the Committee to remain involved in and contribute to the relevant intergovernmental and expert processes relating to the post-2015 development agenda and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as appropriate;

7. *Encourages* Member States:

(a) To promote effective leadership, high standards of professionalism, ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector at the national and local levels, through, inter alia, the use of information and communications technologies;

(b) To promote public trust and accountability by providing access to information, fostering the use of open government data in public institutions and publicly funded organizations and optimizing citizen engagement, and requests the Secretary-General to take steps to support Governments in this regard in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other United Nations system agencies, as appropriate;

(c) To continue to support capacity-building in public governance and institution-building at all levels by, inter alia, encouraging innovation in the public service, fully harnessing the potential of information and communications technologies in all areas of government, engaging citizens and encouraging public participation in managing development;

(d) To promote the effective management of diversity and inclusion in public services and enhance equity in accessibility to services by all, especially people with disabilities, the elderly, women, youth, children and other disadvantaged groups;

8. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue:

(a) To address gaps in research, monitoring, capacity development and implementation in governance and public administration and, in particular, to further develop its public administration country studies and increase the scope and depth of its capacity-development activities with the aim of better assisting countries, according to their specific contexts and needs, in strengthening

participatory governance, strengthening public administration, advancing public-private partnerships, promoting innovation and knowledge transfer in the public sector and better defining e-government strategies and policies;

(b) To promote transformative government and innovation in public governance so as to achieve sustainable development by further promoting advocacy and knowledge transfer on good governance at the global, regional, national and local levels, through, inter alia, United Nations Public Service Day, the United Nations Public Service Awards and the United Nations Public Administration Network, by developing capacity-building tools and approaches, including self-assessment tools, and by providing advisory services in the field, as appropriate;

(c) To assist in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[9] and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[10] on issues related to e-government, e-participation, mobile government, open government data, the use of information and communications technologies in parliaments and the Internet Governance Forum.

[9] See A/C.2/59/3, annex, chap. I.B.
[10] See A/60/687.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Duration of the session

2. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its twelfth session at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 April 2013.

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by 23 Committee members. Observers from organizations of the United Nations system and from intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

4. The following Committee members participated in the session: Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva (Mexico), Rowena Bethel (Bahamas), Vitoria Dias Diogo (Mozambique), Mikhail Dmitriev (Russian Federation), Meredith Edwards (Australia), Walter Fust (Switzerland), Bin Hao (China), Mushtaq Khan (Bangladesh), Pan Suk Kim (Republic of Korea), Francisco Longo Martinez (Spain), Hyam Nashash (Jordan), Joseph Dion Ngute (Cameroon), Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (Kenya), Marta Oyhanarte (Argentina), Paul Oquist (Nicaragua), Odette Ramsingh (South Africa), Siripurapu Kesava Rao (India), Margaret Saner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Valeria Termini (Italy), Gwendoline Williams (Trinidad and Tobago), Susan L. Woodward (United States of America), Philip Yeo (Singapore) and Najat Zarrouk (Morocco).

5. Jan Ziekow (Germany) could not attend the session owing to health reasons.

6. The list of observers who attended the session can be viewed on the website of the United Nations Public Administration Network at www.unpan.org/cepa.

C. Agenda

7. The agenda of the Committee for its twelfth session was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. The role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda:
   (a) Making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda;
   (b) Accountability of stakeholders in public governance for development;

(c) Creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda.

4. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration.

5. Agenda for the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

D. Election of officers

8. The following members served as officers of the Committee during its twelfth session:

Chair:
Najat Zarrouk (Morocco)

Vice-Chairs:
Pan Suk Kim (Republic of Korea)
Marta Oyhanarte (Argentina)
Margaret Saner (United Kingdom)

Rapporteur:
Mikhail Dmitriev (Russian Federation)

Chapter III
Summary of proceedings and conclusions

A. Work of the Committee

9. At the opening session, the Chair, Najat Zarrouk, welcomed the experts and introduced the main theme of the session: the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. The President of the Economic and Social Council, Néstor Osorio, gave an opening statement on the need for good governance in the achievement of the sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. The Assistant-Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Thomas Stelzer, gave a welcome speech on behalf of the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo. Both speakers reiterated the affirmation made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development that in order to achieve sustainable development, the global community needs institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. The speakers also reiterated the need for consistent formulation of recommendations in line with the sustainable development goals.

10. An initiative was launched four weeks in advance of the session, which called for inputs from observers of the Committee as well as academic, governmental and non-governmental institutions. A total of 48 inputs were received and served to inform the Committee on its deliberation on the agenda item on the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Other logistical matters, including those pertaining to the previous and the current session of the Committee, were carried out before the conclusion of the opening session.

B. The role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda

Plenary discussion

11. This session, chaired by Najat Zarrouk, included a pre-recorded video message from the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Shamshad Akhtar. Ms. Akhtar opened the discussion by recalling that it was essential to understand how public governance could contribute to sustainable development in concrete terms. The value of the post-2015 development agenda would not be in a global framework of good governance per se, but in the application of that framework to the sustainable development challenges of the Member States. The United Nations, led by the Secretary-General, had put in place a mechanism for broad and inclusive consultation processes that were ongoing and would be essential in shaping a common vision based on a collective understanding and shared responsibilities. It was clear that there were multiple challenges associated with defining, conceptualizing and measuring the various dimensions of governance. In the current session, the Committee might examine issues of resource efficiency, policy

effectiveness, transparency, accountability, participation and inclusion, among others, and provide guidance on the building blocks of governance for a post-2015 development agenda.

12. Margaret Saner made a presentation on the paper which she coordinated with the other co-authors, Hyam Nashash and Rowena Bethel (E/C.16/2013/2). Ms. Saner remarked that the paper examined the challenges for public administration in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and drew on experiences at the local level in both developed and developing countries. The authors argued that the apparent existence of governance mechanisms might mask deficits on the ground, which required collaborative problem-solving approaches, and that there was a perception that the Millennium Development Goals framework reflected a donor-driven approach with a limited sense of ownership on the part of those most affected. For the post-2015 development agenda, the notion that the Goals were being imposed would need to be addressed.

13. Ms. Saner pointed out that the paper called for a new approach for the post-2015 framework, with the implementation of governance as an essential building block if Member States were to address global fuel, food and financial crises, along with many other pressing issues, such as rising unemployment, increased inequality, climate change and human rights. The new model would crucially need to allow for localizing development objectives, including those pertaining to governance, while recognizing that much depended on the existence of political will, an enabling environment and an allocation of adequate budgetary resources.

14. To that end, transformative government ("t-government") would be a valuable enabler. A historical review of e-government initiatives had revealed both the weaknesses and strengths of applying information and communications technologies in the public sector, while underscoring the need to move from traditional approaches to the automation of existing administrative silos, to whole-of-government re-engineering and the promotion of cooperative relationships between the public sector, citizens and business users. The paper suggested that "t-government" should feature in a post-2015 development agenda.

15. Francisco Longo Martinez made a presentation on the paper that he had co-written with Jan Ziekow (E/C.16.2013/3). Mr. Longo Martinez noted that stakeholder accountability could serve as an indicator of democratic governance. It could also be a key method for ensuring optimal public sector performance and service delivery. The paper defined accountability in the context of democratic governance, described the accountability challenges that occur in developing countries and in public-private collaborations and proposed measures that could address them.

16. Such challenges included ensuring that evaluation of public sector institutions would be transparent and effective, that the public sector would remain responsive to citizen concerns and that engagement would not be solely a top-down process, but one that valued open dialogue between public institutions and the citizens they serve.

17. Public-private collaborations posed particular difficulties for public institutions because private sector entities might not be directly accountable to citizens.

18. Ex post facto provisions for monitoring, evaluating and improving performance were found to be effective provided they were flexible enough to ensure accountability, efficiency and effectiveness even when the goals, objectives and values of implementing entities shifted.

19. Bin Hao made a presentation on the paper that he had co-written with Siripurapu K. Rao (E/C.16/2013/4). Mr. Hao noted that investment in human capital was a basic and strategic investment that had a great bearing on long-term development. In time of financial constraints, it was crucial for countries, especially in the developing world, to explore innovative ways to sustain the necessary resources, paying specific attention to performance reporting, monitoring and evaluation of publicly funded projects, service delivery and government performance.

20. An important dimension in setting the framework for the post-2015 development agenda was that of monitoring progress on national educational goals and targets. Learning outcomes needed to be both inclusive and measurable. There was a need to review the challenges of human capital development and its relationship with public administration, public policy and development.

21. "Brain drain", weak research and development, inaccessibility, insufficient funding, gender inequality and an inadequately educated workforce were highlighted, all of which could have profound economic, social and development impacts, impeding progress for the developing countries.

22. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Practice Director, Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), briefed the Committee on the outcome of the global thematic consultation on governance led by the UNDP Geneva office. Ms. Moleketi noted that democratic governance was widely recognized by participants as a key enabler of development, and an end in itself. It also had a spatial dimension such that policy coherence between different levels of government needed to be improved. Ensuring a measurable implementation, accountability and monitoring framework was critical, as was combating corruption to ensuring better development outcomes. A wider programme of citizen engagement was necessary, following a rights-based approach and with adequate resources, voice and representation at the local level. Governance was no longer about administering citizens but about collaborating so as to achieve common objectives. Effective service delivery was not possible without capable institutions, which required investment, including at the local level. In that regard, new networks and technology, such as social media, had been found to empower citizens, rebuild the social contract and promote the co-production of services.

23. During the discussion that followed, the Committee stressed the multidimensional nature of governance. In the context of the post-2015 discussion, a good balance of political/institutional and managerial/technical aspects of governance would be needed. While technical approaches, such as open government, were essential to producing good outcomes, it should be noted that the institutional aspects of governance were key to sustaining principles and values of democracy. A focus on efficiencies and management in governance had been known to compete with real needs, which was problematic. Social goals should not be blurred with management objectives. The role of the media was also a factor yet was missing from the discussion thus far. Since the field was interdisciplinary in nature, cross-sectoral approaches should be integrated into schools of public administration.

There was also a need to open up the conversation to the international governance architecture. In the light of the points mentioned above, a post-2015 development agenda should focus on the key components of governance with some sense of priority in order to avoid an "everything but the kitchen sink" approach. Greater specificity was also needed, taking questions of implementation into consideration.

24. The Committee further noted that the complexity of public policy problems was one of the features of new governance scenarios. Governments could not solve all problems alone. Development goals, including governance-related objectives, must take into account economic, social and environmental factors, for example in the exploitation of natural resources. Accordingly, the Committee's discussion should consider public administration in the context of issues such as pro-poor policies, social policy, education, health, employment and so on.

25. Collaborative governance was increasingly seen to be a response to the challenge of complexity, resulting in the involvement of the private sector, citizens and other stakeholders in public policymaking and service delivery. Consequently, public officials would need problem-solving rather than rule-following administrative skills. At the same time, collaboration created problems of accountability in all countries and a lack of clear responsibilities of the public officials, political leaders, the private sector and others involved in the design and implementation of government programmes.

26. In all of this, the inclusion and engagement of people in objective-setting, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are paramount. Legitimacy depends on citizen engagement, which is both a tool of governance and an indicator of policy. Citizens should be involved as comprehensively as possible. It was, however, easy to underestimate the radical change in public servants' behaviour necessary to engage with citizens. For some, citizen engagement felt like something very courageous. A cultural change in government and society would be required to bring engagement to life, along with the human capital and skills necessary for effective participation. Related to this is a sense of individual responsibility that should be nurtured alongside the collective responsibility embodied in public governance institutions and processes.

27. Localization was seen as fundamental to the success of development goals and gearing implementation to the needs of people. Global goals should be fit for the purpose and attuned to the benefits and risks at the national level. More than that, global goals must be integrated with national programmes and domestic policies. Local development strategies, which should be consistent with the national and global agenda, should be designed on the basis of local consultations with attention to institutional capacity, citizen engagement and the possible reform of political institutions.

28. It was time to talk more about transformational governance in which governance processes and stakeholder roles are examined. Technology plays a part in "t-government" but is not the end in itself. Moreover, technology should not undermine other approaches to administrative reform better aligned with the realities in different countries.

29. The selection of indicators was itself a challenge and the responsibility of political leaders. Targeted interventions for vulnerable groups, for example, addressing pockets of poverty in developed countries, depends heavily on data

availability and reliability. Measurement could be overly complex and bureaucratic at the expense of implementation.

30. Post-conflict situations are a special case where governance is concerned. A UNDP-led initiative had recently concluded that the United Nations system, along with the wider international system, was not being supportive enough of core public administration functions (especially for peacebuilding and State-building). Also the current international approach based on a public administration model from Western settings with little modification to the needs and context of post-conflict countries pushed too strongly for systemic reforms when a rapid focus on basic functionality is needed. Most post-conflict countries do not have the capacities needed to adopt that model, especially because of "brain drain" and the absence of a necessary trust in government. Public administration is as much a political exercise as a technical one. Finally, the United Nations system needs to undertake an internal revision of its own to support public administration in such settings.

Thematic group discussions

31. The Committee divided itself into three groups over two meetings to allow for a more in-depth examination and exchange of the session's sub-themes before returning to the plenary.

Making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda

32. One group examined the sub-theme of "making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda". During its deliberations, the group focused on identifying specific practices and approaches that had demonstrably supported good public governance. There was consensus that there was no one model of governance, but rather common characteristics that were found to be present where successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals had been realized. At the same time, the group acknowledged that the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 enumerated a set of universal values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, solidarity and shared responsibility and objectives, including in the area of human rights, democracy and good governance. The group also noted the relevance of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

33. Broadly speaking, governance for the achievement of sustainable development goals should be based on the following:

(a) Beneficiary/citizen focused goals and objectives: goals and objectives should be beneficiary oriented/citizen centred from the planning stages through to execution. This requires that trust is strengthened among stakeholders; examples where approaches have been successful include t-government and gender-responsive budgeting;

(b) Localization: localization of planning and implementation in particular, ensuring basic needs and inclusive consultations was important to the success of the Millennium Development Goals. There is a need to think globally and regionally while acting locally; moving towards more specific identification of what needs to be done to ensure aspirations are realized on the ground. Also required is a bottom-up approach to objective-setting, integrated with national strategic plans by local communities and human capital development at the local level and with children's

education. The United Nations Environment Programme in the early peace implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was cited as a successful example;

(c) Political will: political will was considered crucial to ensure the sustainability of reforms in the long term. Different approaches were shared by experts on how to overcome the short-term nature of the political process in many countries. One suggestion was for stakeholder partnerships founded on broad-based objectives and implementation processes based on the consensus of all parties involved. This would ensure a long-term political commitment on a multi-party basis beyond the electoral cycle. Another approach would be to leverage internationally binding commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals through monitoring and progress reports;

(d) Effective partnerships: these partnerships should achieve meaningful results, including a multi-stakeholder approach and ensuring the cooperation and collaboration of development partners;

(e) Revision of relevant indicators: this would include ensuring data quality and meaningful reporting, for example, in reference to the Millennium Development Goals. Some experts raised concern about the availability and reliability of data and statistics. At the same time, there was a concern that the evolution of social and economic factors in different stages of development should be reflected in such indicators. Qualitative indicators should be introduced, such as indicators on the quality of life and on general well-being;

(f) Capacity-building for implementation: successful implementation required that people's skills in collaboration and innovation be strengthened; it is also important to equip people for leading and managing change. It was widely agreed that capacity-building should take place at the individual, system and organization/institutional levels. The important role of the leadership in equipping people for leading and managing change should also be recognized;

(g) Meaningful reporting based on detailed assessment: meaningful reports based on detailed assessments are very important when dealing with global challenges, such as poverty;

(h) Ensuring space for innovation: when establishing international development goals it is important to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility for countries to innovatively utilize new approaches (including technologies) that lead to country-specific responses. There was a need to move from e-government into transformative government, or "t-government", and use technology as a driver and tool to promote good governance.

Accountability of stakeholders in public governance for development

34. A second group examined the sub-theme "Accountability of stakeholders in public governance for development". Accountability is vital for strong public institutions. Citizen engagement is a core element of social accountability, and has the potential of empowering citizens and elevating the voices of the most vulnerable. Four issues were underscored: (a) the culture of public service; (b) the need to promote the highest standards of public service; (c) the importance of achieving citizen engagement; and (d) the need to reflect on changing concepts of representative and participatory democracies as opposed to open-model democracy.

35. Traditional approaches of accountability are no longer sufficient. The concept of social accountability, where civil servant organizations or ordinary citizens could exercise accountability over the government was noted. Such a concept is process-oriented: it empowers citizens and makes them co-creators of public services contributing to social cohesion. The main challenge of social accountability, however, is its operationalization. Effective accountability mechanisms are needed for public-private partnerships as States increasingly move from subcontracting or coordination towards collaboration.

36. The importance of a typology of public-private partnerships should be stressed. National Governments had to lead in public-private partnerships, set a regulatory framework, and allow the private sector to lead in the implementing process. Managing expectations and communication, as well as the cultural context are also crucial for the success of the partnerships.

37. The group reflected on the questions of why government accountability mattered; how and what kind of accountability could help in achieving sustainable development; how to create accountability in public-private partnerships; and how to create citizen engagement and encourage citizens to be engaged.

38. With regard to citizen engagement, an example from Brazil was cited where it was initiated at the local level and only then was scaled up nationwide. Civic education in schools to stimulate reflection on the rights and duties of citizens should be taken up. The expression "citizen engagement" should be used with proper awareness of the various social groups, including minorities without citizenship status, who also have to be engaged in public discussions.

39. Sound social and economic policies should be part of the sustainable development framework, which could be accomplished only through good governance and solid public administration systems.

40. In the conversation to date on the post-2015 development agenda, corruption had emerged as an obstacle for development. A key element of action against corruption was the effectiveness and accountability of public administration and the ability of government to provide the necessary services. All stakeholders must be engaged, including the private sector and civil society in a broad sense, which includes academia, professionals, and educators. In this process, it was important to address the "cultural trap" when a culture of corruption emerged. It was also important to have the right institutional structure and criminal justice system to exercise accountability and to maintain the golden medium of prevention and repression.

41. The vicious cycle of conflict, political turmoil and bad governance needed to be acknowledged. The recent experience of the Arab States may suggest that there was a need to: (a) redirect public resources away from security and the policing sector to basic social services; (b) decentralize and empower local councils (in political, fiscal and technical terms); (c) pass civil society laws; (d) combine information and communications technologies and e-government with political will for better government; (e) develop the private sector through support for small and medium-sized enterprises; (f) ensure open access to government data; and (g) revisit governance indicators and introduce a new governance report for the Arab region. The practical mechanisms of exercising accountability are the key difficulties to address.

42. Nicaragua had adopted a model of development based on solidarity principles. This approach promoted citizen participation. Female participation in political life had increased. The involvement of the poor in the process allowed the local government, the regional government and entrepreneurs to solve the problems better and attract larger external resources. The country moved from public-private partnerships to social cohesion and a consensual style of governing.

43. Nine key issues were highlighted in the summary:

- Why accountability matters
- What accountability matters, and the changing geometry of accountability
- How to professionalize the public administration and the need for doing so
- How to address accountability in public-private partnerships and the importance of inclusiveness, the multi-stakeholder approach and of creating win-win situations around common problems and the partners involved
- How to achieve greater inclusiveness rather than coordination
- How to combine the engagement of citizens with provisions for civic education
- What responsive governance means to citizens and local empowerment
- How to make use of appropriate technologies for governments to improve transparency
- How to give space to public administration and governance in United Nations activities.

Creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda

44. A third group examined the sub-theme "Creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda". While acknowledging the multidimensional character and complex nature of governance and public administration, as well as the fact that each country had its own challenges and ways of meeting them, a post-2015 role for the United Nations was to ensure clarity in the respective roles, responsibilities and resource allocations of the main actors who were involved in each key area of development, such as health or human capital development. There should be a link in measurement from the global to the local level.

45. The United Nations might consider setting global standards in terms of what Governments could do to achieve "success"; for instance, high-level standards around key issues, such as ethical standards, with each country having flexibility in implementing them.

46. Monitoring and evaluation present huge challenges, as there are many alternative methodologies that might be appropriate in different circumstances.

47. Performance contracting is an example of a policy that could prove successful if implemented with good measurement and performance for results. But in countries where there are no penalties on the public service for not performing, success is less probable.

48. The flight of human capital from some developing countries can have catastrophic results. Sometimes it can occur owing to policies that were not

developed locally. To avoid this, countries need to have a strong domestic agenda with a vision of the specific types of human resources development that are needed most and that require donor support. One possible approach to human development that the United Nations could consider encouraging is that of Singapore, which emphasized vocational education and training by tapping the potential of developed country companies to provide government-subsidized training centres.

49. Performance monitoring and evaluation systems in developed countries were commonly criticized by auditors general and others for not performing satisfactorily. Therefore caution should be exercised by developing countries in trying to copy those systems. Instead, care must be given to match the mechanisms used to internal human and resource capabilities.

50. There are gaps in research and monitoring on the role of both the media and donors in their potential contribution to development. The role of the media could be twofold: to hold Governments to account in a responsible way or to be simply negative. But in order to do the former, they need the skills and this should be considered in respect of capacity-building for the post 2015 agenda. In that context, the United Nations needs to rethink the role of donor agencies so that their policies are more aligned to the priorities of recipient Governments.

51. To make performance management systems and evaluations effective, a difficult balance needs to be struck between achieving independence from the Government while staying within political realities.

52. Case studies could be very enlightening. But to be useful, they need to be clearly understood and adapted to the country in question. Political leadership is required to promote a learning culture and experimentation.

53. It should be recognized that the world has already changed and that conditions are vastly different than they were even five years ago. The balance of political power globally is shifting between developed and developing countries. In this dynamic environment, the dimensions of good governance would depend on the nature of the political system of the country, the legislative framework and country-specific governance capacities. Uniform governance principles are not always applicable to every country.

Resumed plenary discussion

54. The resumed plenary discussion of agenda item 3 on the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda began with presentations of the main observations arising from the thematic discussions. The Committee generally agreed with the assessments of the three discussion groups, while making further observations, as summarized below.

55. The Committee reiterated the importance of considering country differences. Programmes and projects were very specific to countries and, in that regard, history, culture, political regime types and structures were all highly relevant. The fact that standardized global indicators gave a skewed picture of a country's development on the basis of a "one size fits all" model. had to be considered. Innovation and creativity should be nurtured as drivers of economic and social development, including innovation in the public sector.

56. The right to access information was underscored for its role in promoting transparency. Governments should not only recognize the right of access to information but engage in the proactive disclosure and elimination of requirements to provide prior proof of interest. No institution supported by public funds should, a priori, be excluded from obligations to provide information. The judiciary must be capable of enforcing these rights and/or responsible institutions could be charged with guaranteeing implementation. The media had a central role to play that should be acknowledged and promoted. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should continue to play a leading role in building the capacity of media, for example, through the provision of scholarships, not only to increase government transparency but also to educate the public about the use of information.

57. It was noted that there was a political dimension to governance that was universal, where local differences were not valid. The specifics of health, education and other goals could be localized but not universal political values such as democracy, where there was a need for international standards promoted by the United Nations. Sustainable development was enhanced by the legitimacy of pluralism and specifically, through comprehensive consultation with stakeholders. Civic education programmes should be expanded for this purpose to include topics such as the meaning of the State and government, the limits of central government and so on.

58. In the post-2015 context, it would be important to tackle issues of corruption, and specifically focus on prevention, while strengthening the professionalism of the public service. Information and communications technologies should be fully integrated in governance practices.

59. Finally, it was noted that the Committee had been invited by the President of the Economic and Social Council to consider its mandate in the light of the post-2015 development agenda and follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to convey its advice to the Council following the session.

Conclusions and recommendations on the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda

60. The key issues that emerged during the discussion were the importance of: (a) access to information; (b) innovation in government so as not to become trapped in administrative routine; (c) combining the global and local, avoiding a "one size fits all" approach and using indicators that fit the shifting socioeconomic conditions of a country; (d) quality, relevance and local proximity of data; (e) local ownership of development objectives and some combination of horizontal and top-down engagement in objective-setting; (f) the role of the political system, including the importance of political competition and inclusion for longer-term development objectives; and (g) searching for good local practices and learning to scale them up.

61. Recommendations included promoting: the professionalization of public administration; access to information; the availability of adequate data; better use of public-private partnerships with cooperative approaches; institution-building for preventing and combating corruption; innovative approaches with proper considerations to the local context and local solutions; effective relationships between the government and citizens; the localization of citizen engagement initiatives and local capacity development to implement the Millennium

Development Goals and sustainable development goals; the empowerment of citizens to get more engaged; and the adaptation and broad use of modern means of communications.

62. A critical post-2015 role for States Members of the United Nations is to ensure clarity in the respective roles, responsibilities and resources of the main stakeholders, which include not only government at the national and local levels but also civil society, the private sector, donors and other major actors.

63. In the light of a period of transformational change requiring collaboration across all sectors, Member States and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are encouraged to promote collaborative governance at all levels to support a three-pronged approach, comprising: (a) training and capacity-building; (b) the development of appropriate case studies and guidance on best practices; and (c) a clearing house or similar mechanism for the benefit of Member States, including best practices that might be used in comparable country contexts.

64. Member States are encouraged to reinforce the importance of human capital development in the achievement of the post-2015 agenda, including capacities related to addressing country-specific challenges and the identification of opportunities such as vocational training. In addition, Member States could encourage Governments to strengthen existing institutions with a view to arresting the detrimental impacts of "brain drain".

65. Member States are encouraged to explore how to provide capacity-building mechanisms for major stakeholders on public administration and good governance, the latter being defined, where appropriate, in a country-specific context.

66. Member States should include in their post-2015 development agendas the consideration of the role and necessary coordination of donor agencies so as to align as far as possible both the global agenda and the policy priorities of national Governments.

67. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs should continue with its use of case studies and model codes of conduct as a means of providing guidance to countries on how to achieve solutions while ensuring that they take the specific circumstances of member countries into account — such as the political context and level of development — and tailor any implementation guidance to country needs.

C. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration

68. The Secretariat presented a note (E/C.16/2013/5) highlighting the major activities it undertook in 2012-2013. The meeting, chaired by Pan Suk Kim, included a presentation by the chiefs of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management on the major activities and results achieved by the Division in 2012-2013. Those activities include (a) collaboration of the Committee and the Division on the activities and outputs of the Division; (b) highlights in the areas of advocacy and servicing of intergovernmental bodies; (c) analytical research, namely the United Nations Public Administration Country Studies and the United Nations e-Government Survey; (d) advisory services in the field and the training tools developed by the Division; (e) partners and regional affiliates, including the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs governance and institution-

building cluster, the United Nations Public Administration Network, and regional offices and programmes; and (f) the priorities for the biennium 2014-2015.

69. At the twelfth session, the Committee continued its practice of breaking into working groups defined by the three branches of the Division. In all three, Committee members sought ways to facilitate more substantive dialogue among members and closer communication with the Secretariat between annual meetings, such as online or through e-mail. The following reports from each working group were presented to Committee members in a plenary session chaired by Martha Oyhanarte.

Working group I
Public administration capacity: institutional and human resource development

70. The Public Administration Capacity Branch made a presentation on the strategic direction for developing the institutional and human capacities of public administration. In particular, General Assembly resolution 50/225 on public administration and development was recalled in order to emphasize the important role of public administration in the development process. In addition, the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reinforced the Division's focus on institutional and human capacities.

Working group II
E-government and information and communications technologies for development

71. The holistic approach to the activities of the e-Government Branch was presented to illustrate the three pillars of work which are normative, analytical and capacity-building, through specific examples of the Branch's work in various activities at the global and regional levels in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The future priorities were also presented, with an emphasis on: (a) strengthening the holistic and integrated approach of the activities of the Branch and inter-branch collaboration; (b) strengthening collaboration with other Divisions of the Department to ensure coherence of action in support of Member States and the effective promotion of the United Nations development agenda; and (c) enhancing the alignment of the activities of the Branch with the outcomes of intergovernmental processes in the areas of economic, social and environmental development.

Working group III
Citizen engagement in managing development, open government data

72. Based on a presentation made by the Development Management Branch, the working group reviewed advocacy and normative support; research and analysis; knowledge-sharing and training; and advisory services carried out 2012-2013 on citizen engagement for development management. The critical role of citizen engagement, including stakeholder accountability, in development management was highlighted, particularly in view of the need to accelerate progress during the last 1,000 days to the Millennium Development Goals target date and planning for the post-2015 development agenda.

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

73. The Committee highlighted the importance of: (a) encouraging networking and sharing information; (b) educating civil servants on professionalism, ethics and integrity; (c) selecting and retaining talent; (d) increasing the morale of civil servants; (e) providing support to post-conflict countries; (f) providing access of people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups to services; (g) managing risk and disasters; (h) providing continuous training; and (i) promoting public-private partnerships.

74. In addition, the Committee suggested that the Secretariat: (a) promote transformative government and innovation in public governance to achieve socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability; (b) promote advocacy and knowledge-sharing on good governance at the global, regional, national and local levels; (c) develop appropriate capacity-building tools and approaches, including self-assessment tools; (d) work with Governments to adapt good governance indicators to national circumstances, continue to respond in a timely manner to requests for support in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating e-governance frameworks and innovative solutions with the adequate resources and strengthen the network of partners working together to promote e-government solutions for Member States; (e) continue strengthening technical cooperation activities in the field, including at the subnational level, in line with national development policy frameworks, public administration frameworks and holistic e-government approaches; (f) investigate the possibility of advancing a study on the potential of e-government to promote cost reductions in public administration expenditures through e-solutions; (g) promote partnerships in support of regional training institutions on public administration and e-government development; and (h) investigate the possibility of advancing public-private partnerships, including a revolving fund tapping on telecommunications levies so as to promote the development of e-government in Member States.

75. The Committee agreed that public participation and citizen engagement are part of a democratic process of accountable decision-making. Formal and informal mechanisms of participation need to be evaluated to assess their success in achieving development outcomes.

76. The Committee proposed that the Secretariat: (a) include citizen engagement as one of the core criteria for evaluating a government's performance and continue to work with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions to evaluate different aspects of government performance; (b) carry out a survey on citizen engagement as part of a new governance inventory and assessment tool; (c) map formal ways of engagement and correlate them with information on outcomes in terms of development; (d) publicize and follow-up on previous anti-corruption work; (e) organize expert group meetings on key issues of citizen engagement, such as government-citizen partnerships, public-private partnerships and the formal-informal interface; (f) enable the transfer of knowledge by translating the Open Government Data Toolkit into different languages and work on the self-assessment toolkit; (g) prepare simple public information on basic governance goals targeting audiences such as youth by using social media; and (h) work with observers on outreach.

77. The Committee noted that particular attention should be given to the promotion of transformative government for good governance through genuine participation. Innovation is at the heart of government transformation and a culture of innovation must be promoted, including knowledge exchange and transfer of innovative practices through the United Nations Public Service Awards and other United Nations compendiums.

78. The Committee also noted that the vital role that information and communications technologies can play in promoting good governance should be recognized. It is undeniable that a framework enabled by information and communications technologies is essential for public administration, particularly for the effective delivery of public services. E-government should be mainstreamed as a vehicle for achieving the development goals and underscore the valuable role that innovative technological solutions can play in facilitating citizen engagement, enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and preventing corruption.

79. The Committee commended the creation of the Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers' Network and urged its continued support and encourage the creation and support of other networks in the public sector.

80. The Committee agreed that developing human resources in the public sector should be a priority. One element that needs to be included is the pivotal role that the human resources of the public administration can play in national economic development.

81. The Committee raised concern about the low number of participants in the online training and suggested that the Secretariat and Committee members themselves publicize the availability of such training in their respective countries and among institutions and partners. Training could also be used to increase the awareness of the decision makers of the importance of effective governance in achieving development objectives. At the same time, a concern was raised about the quality of the online training, and it was suggested that the Secretariat consider steps to adjust or modify the online training courses with proper regard to outside suggestions.

D. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the next session of the Committee and preliminary review of the draft report of the Committee

82. The Committee agreed on the main theme: "Transforming public administration for sustainable development".

83. The Committee approved the convening of its thirteenth session from 7 to 11 April 2014 and approved the following agenda for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Transforming public administration for sustainable development:

(a) Strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management;

(b) Promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development;

(c) Invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service.

Papers on the themes will be prepared by selected Committee members.

4. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

5. Agenda for the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

84. In the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), world leaders envisioned an enhanced multilateral system to better address the global challenges of sustainable development. In response to the remarks of the President of the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Council and based on the conclusion of the meeting organized by the President of the Council on 3 April 2013, the Secretariat invited all the members of the Committee of Experts to reflect upon and review the mandate of the Committee. The Chair initiated a review of the mandate of the Committee, including its working methods, with a view to better supporting the Council in addressing the global development agenda. The Committee discussed the basis, needs and possibilities of the review. It was agreed by the Committee that a subcommittee should be formed of the following members to conduct the review and submit a separate report to the Council by 19 July 2013:

Najat Zarrouk (Chair)
Mikhail Dmitriev (Rapporteur)
Pan Suk Kim (member)
Marta Oyhanarte (member)
Margaret Saner (member)
Paul Oquist (member).

85. The Committee adopted the draft report of its thirteenth session.

Annex

List of documents

Symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.16/2013/1	2	Provisional agenda and organization of work
E/C.16/2013/2	3	Paper on making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda
E/C.16/2013/3	3	Paper on accountability of stakeholders in public governance for development
E/C.16/2013/4	3	Paper on creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda
E/C.16/2013/5	4	Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration
CEPA/CP/2013/1	3	Paper on public-private partnerships in sustainable development for social networking
CEPA/CP/2013/2	3	Paper on United Nations system preparations for a post-2015 development agenda in relation to the theme of governance

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